

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: February 15, 2011

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Sarah Branum
Project Manager, KEWM-4

Proposed Action: Provide funds for the Blue Mountain Land Trust (BMLT) to purchase a conservation easement on the Wolf Fork property.

Fish and Wildlife Project No.: 1996-046-01, Reference Number BPA-005911.

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.25 Transfer, lease, disposition or acquisition of interests in uncontaminated land for habitat preservation or wildlife management, and only associated buildings that support these purposes. Uncontaminated means that there would be no potential for release of substances at a level, or in a form, that would pose a threat to public health or the environment.

Location: Township 9 North, Range 39 East, Section 11 T of the Dayton Quadrangle, in Columbia County, Washington (near Dayton Washington).

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA, BMLT, and the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board of Washington propose to fund the acquisition of a conservation easement on the 99.4 acre Wolf Fork property, 112 Wolf Fork Road, approximately five miles south of Dayton, Washington. This permanent conservation easement on private property would protect an extensive forested riparian buffer, a sizeable functioning floodplain, and dynamic channel migration zones where two forks of the Touchet River converge. Both sides of approximately 1/2 mile of the Wolf Fork and 1/3 mile of the south bank of the North Fork of the Touchet River are contained within the property. The Wolf Fork and the North Fork streams have perennial flows and contain strong populations of middle Columbia steelhead trout and bull trout, which are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The property would help meet the conservation purposes of the ESA by providing spawning and rearing habitat for the species.

BPA's funding would be from the 2008 Columbia Basin Fish Accords. Partially funding this acquisition would provide BPA with credits for partial mitigation of anadromous and resident fish habitat losses due to the development, operation, and management of the federal hydroelectric facilities on the Columbia River and its tributaries. The BMLT would hold the conservation easement and BPA would have third party rights of enforcement. Prior to any management activities, BPA would conduct further environmental review.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

Based on the provision that cultural resource consultation would be conducted prior to any ground disturbing activities, this proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Susan Offerdal

Susan Offerdal

Environmental Project Manager - KEC-4

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 16, 2011

Attachment:

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Wolf Fork Conservation Easement

Project Number: 1996-041-01, Reference Number: BPA-005911

This project has been found to **not adversely** affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect With Conditions
1. Cultural Resources No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime agricultural lands No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Consistency with state and local laws and regulations No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Other No effect as this is strictly a land acquisition.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: /s/ Susan Offerdal

Date: February 15, 2011